

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Carol Rizzolo , I am a resident of Guilford

I stand in support of HB 6616: An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status. Expanding access to HUSKY regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 26; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age. If Connecticut wants a future that includes healthy families and a stable, thriving and growing workforce that is ready to meet the needs of our future, Connecticut must ensure that these individuals have access to health coverage.

I am retired from a 25 yr career as a practicing Physician Assistant. 20 of those years were in the practice of Primary Care Pediatrics. I specialized in treatment of asthma and was a member of the Governor's Task Force on Asthma. Undocumented children and their families often lived in substandard housing where asthma is rife. In order to keep these children out of hospitals and in school, the child's asthma needed to be controlled. In order for older kids, young adults and parents to work, everyone needs to be healthy and school aged children need to be in school. I saw many of these children for years feeling it to be my duty to care for children and their families regardless of country of origin or legal status in this country. Many of these families work hard to build a better life for their children. Much like my family did over a century ago. Health care is a human right and to withhold it from children and young adults is unconscionable. Who are we as a nation if we refuse to take care of the neediest among us?

I support **HB 6616** and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.